

### Slovenia's national security in a new European environment

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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Forschungsbericht / research report

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Grizold, A. (1997). *Slovenia's national security in a new European environment*. (Berichte / BIÖst, 12-1997). Köln: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-42898>

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ISSN 0435-7183



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2. Januar 1997

Der Verfasser lehrt Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Ljubljana.

Redaktion: Gerhard Wettig/Anna Eckner



**Anton Grizold**

## **Die nationale Sicherheit Sloweniens im neuen europäischen Umfeld**

Bericht des BIOst Nr. 12/1997

### **Kurzfassung**

#### *Vorbemerkung*

Als neukonstituierter Nationalstaat steht Slowenien vor der Aufgabe, Konzepte, Richtlinien und Institutionen für die nationale Sicherheit auszuarbeiten. Das geschieht unter den Bedingungen eines jungen Staates in einem gewandelten Europa, weshalb nicht nur die eigenen außenpolitischen Erfahrungen und Grundsätze zu berücksichtigen sind, sondern ebenso die dynamischen Begleitumstände, die sich in vielfältigen Vorschlägen und Bemühungen um Integration nach Europa äußern. Nur vor diesem Hintergrund ist zu verstehen, wie Slowenien sich ein neues Netz für seine nationale Sicherheit knüpft, und ebenso lassen sich auf dieser Basis die slowenischen Bemühungen um Teilnahme am europäischen Integrationsprozeß und um Beitritt zur NATO und zur Europäischen Union verfolgen.

#### *Ergebnisse*

1. Bei der Festlegung eines Rahmens für die nationale Sicherheit muß Slowenien außer seinen eigenen Bedürfnissen auch die Entwicklungen im sich neu formierenden europäischen - und auch weltweiten - Sicherheitsumfeld im Auge behalten, denn das diesbezügliche politische Handeln und die Institutionen hängen *per definitionem* eng mit den internationalen Gegebenheiten zusammen.
2. Seit der slowenischen Unabhängigkeit war es der einhellige Wunsch und das erklärte Ziel aller politischen Kräfte im Parlament, die gesellschaftlichen und politischen Institutionen des Landes grundlegend neu zu gestalten und das nationale Sicherheitssystem zu reformieren. Die Kernfrage, um die es dabei geht - Umorganisation der slowenischen Armee oder Entmilitarisierung des Landes - ist jedoch in der Regierung und in der Öffentlichkeit nach wie vor umstritten.
3. Die neue slowenische Verfassung vom Dezember 1991 brachte sieben grundsätzliche Änderungen bezüglich des nationalen Sicherheitssystems mit sich. Dazu gehören eine entstehende parlamentarische Mehrparteiendemokratie, Gewaltenteilung zwischen der exekutiven, legislativen und judikativen Staatsgewalt, erweiterte Regierungskompetenzen in Fragen des Militärhaushalts und der militärischen Aktivitäten, Umorganisation des Verteidigungsministeriums sowie Konsolidierung der Armee, Abschaffung aller Gesetze, die dem Militär in sozialen und politischen Kernfragen Autonomie gewähren, sowie

Abschaffung aller militärischen "Fachschulen", die früher die Stelle von öffentlichen höheren Schulen und Universitäten eingenommen hatten.

4. Mit diesen Reformen wird das einstige privilegierte Verhältnis zwischen dem Militär und der führenden Regierungspartei beseitigt, und es findet keine politische und religiöse Diskriminierung im militärischen Leben mehr statt. Darüber hinaus wirken sich die Reformen in der Weise aus, daß das slowenische Militär einen repräsentativeren Querschnitt der Gesellschaft bildet, was Geschlecht, Religion und soziale Herkunft betrifft.
5. Das Militär steht jetzt nach dem Muster entwickelter parlamentarischer Systeme vollständig unter ziviler Kontrolle und es ist, was den Einblick durch das Parlament, die Medien, die Wissenschaft und die Öffentlichkeit betrifft, transparenter geworden. Die Neuorganisation sorgt auch dafür, daß die Militärführung der obersten repräsentativen Macht der Nation unterstellt ist und daß alle Entscheidungen, die die nationale Sicherheit betreffen, vom Parlament getroffen werden, wobei sich die Rolle des ansonsten entpolitisierten Militärs auf die Ausführung dieser Beschlüsse beschränkt.
6. Probleme haben sich dagegen beim Wandel der Beziehungen zwischen dem zivilen und dem militärischen Bereich in Slowenien ergeben, soweit es um den Aufbau des neuen nationalen Sicherheitsrahmens geht. Ursache dafür sind Verzögerungen bei der Verabschiedung neuer Gesetze und unklare Verantwortlichkeit der staatlichen Rechtsinstitutionen gegenüber dem Parlament und der Öffentlichkeit in Fragen der nationalen Sicherheit. Dies wiederum ist symptomatisch für die widersprüchliche und unausgereifte slowenische Politik, deren neu entstehende Elite noch immer untereinander zerstritten ist und in der es den zivilen Leistungsträgern der Gesellschaft noch immer an nennenswertem Einfluß fehlt.
7. Auf der internationalen Ebene setzt Slowenien auf Kooperation und weniger auf Wettbewerb als vorrangige Strategie zur Lösung internationaler Probleme. In der unmittelbaren Nachbarschaft hat sich das Land energisch bemüht, die Beziehungen zu den angrenzenden Staaten zu verbessern. Diese Bemühungen sind zwar im großen und ganzen erfolgreich, aber zwei wichtige Fragen sind bislang ungelöst: italienische "Optionen" auf Eigentumsrechte in Slowenien und Grenzfragen mit Kroatien.
8. Allem politischen Gezänk und einer gewissen öffentlichen Unsicherheit zum Trotz besteht allgemeine Einigkeit darüber, daß Slowenien den Weg zur Integration nach Europa, und hier vor allem in die NATO und die EU, beschreiten soll. Das ist das vorrangige außenpolitische Ziel des Landes, mit dem es sich die Pflicht auferlegt, zwischenstaatliche Konflikte friedlich beizulegen, aber auch, sich im Falle eines Angriffs - notfalls allein - zu verteidigen. Slowenien hat das NATO-Programm "Partnerschaft für den Frieden" (PfP) nachdrücklich befürwortet, und die für die Verteidigung Verantwortlichen bekunden höchstes Interesse an dessen Möglichkeiten zur Schulung und Ausbildung von Offizieren, zur Modernisierung des Personalwesens und seine Anpassung an die NATO-Konvention, zum Aufbau eines NATO-kompatiblen Kommunikationssystems, zur Teilnahme an gemeinsamen Übungen und zur Aufstellung einer militärischen Einheit für internationale Zusammenarbeit. Das slowenische Parlament hat Gesetze zur weiteren Unterstützung der

NATO und des PfP-Programms verabschiedet, durch die Mittel zum Ausbau der Streitkräfte und zur Sicherstellung der NATO-Kompatibilität der Ausrüstung bereitgestellt werden.

9. Den Nutzen einer Mitarbeit am PfP-Programm sieht Slowenien in einem verbesserten Sicherheitsgefühl für das Land, in der Teilnahme an gemeinsamer operativer Planung, in der Entwicklung einer modernen NATO-kompatiblen Verteidigungsstruktur und militärischen Verfahrensweisen, und in einer späteren Einbeziehung in eine integrierte gesamteuropäische militärische und politische Struktur.
10. Der slowenischen Öffentlichkeit ist bewußt, daß im Zuge der Integration und Entspannung in Europa eine reale Möglichkeit zur Reform der NATO und zur Stärkung ihrer sicherheitspolitischen Rolle besteht. Außerdem wünscht sie schnellstmöglich über die Vor- und Nachteile einer NATO-Mitgliedschaft Sloweniens informiert zu werden.





## Introduction

Contemporary national security can be defined theoretically as a state of security in which a nation-state's balanced physical, spiritual, psychical and material existence is ensured in relation to other communities.<sup>1</sup>

It encompasses the following basic elements: existence and maintenance of territorial integrity (including airspace and territorial waters), influence and status in the international community, economic development and the protection of life and property of its inhabitants. Therefore, the national security in the present day world is generally determined by two sets of factors which derive from:

- a) the internal situation of a nation-state, and
- b) the international security environment (sub-regional, regional and/or global).

Regarding the internal aspect, Slovenia, as a newly established nation-state, has accomplished some of the essential changes important for a successful transition from an authoritarian system into a democratic socio-political system and market economy. One of the fundamental issues in this process of democratisation concerns the formation of a new national security framework and, within this, the regulation of civil-military relations based on democratic principles ensuring the supremacy of civil authority and its control over the military and national security issues.

The new Slovene national security identity was shaped at a time when a new European security environment came into being characterised by the following elements: end of the bipolar division of Europe, general détente among the great powers, withdrawal of Russian troops from Central Europe (and the Slovene vicinity), strengthening of co-operation between NATO and East and Central European countries, escalating complexity of socio-economic, national and other issues in the post-socialist countries, military-political crises in the Balkans and renewed competition among great powers for new spheres of influence in Eastern, Central and South-eastern Europe inspired primarily by economic interests and security concerns. These changes and processes have ushered in a new European security climate which stimulates co-operation and multilateralism in decision-making with regard to European political and security affairs. The search for a common and comprehensive European security order originates from the awareness that modern security is a complex mixture of ingredients entailing various dimensions of social life, such as economic, political, humanitarian, ecological and military considerations. Furthermore, peaceful conflict resolution may well become untenable if a future military crisis assumes an international aspect and Slovenia's concomitant military commitments demand resort to military means.

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<sup>1</sup> Anton Grizold, *The Concept of National Security in the Contemporary World*. International Journal on World Peace, No. 3 (1994), p. 39.

The limitations of Slovenia's security policy become more apparent when they are viewed in the light of European integration processes as well as against the background of newly developed military technology which can be easily used or rather misused to cause mass destruction.

The purpose of this essay is to analyse Slovenia's endeavours so far to shape its new national security framework after independence. It examines both internal efforts to create state and social structures, politics and civil-military relations along democratic lines, and Slovenia's international attempts to integrate itself in the West, especially in the EU and NATO. The analysis will also include the reaction of public opinion to Slovenia's policy goal of gaining NATO membership.

## **1. The Creation of a New Slovene National Security Framework**

On June 25, 1991, the Slovene Parliament passed the Declaration of Independence of Slovenia, by means of which Slovenia was politically and legally obliged to take over all functions of state authority on its territory. The day after the proclamation, the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) intervened in Slovenia with armed troops and air power. However, the employment of the YPA as a "super police" proved to be inefficient. As a multinational conscript army it was unable to establish the necessary cohesion and motivation to fight, which is why the lower units of YPA disintegrated as soon as they engaged with Slovene Territorial Defense (TD) units.<sup>2</sup>

When the YPA departed from Slovenia in October 1991, the supervision of Slovene territory was taken over by the Slovene TD units and police forces. From that point onwards, the necessity to develop a new national security framework has been intensified. It is worthwhile to mention that after the first multi-party elections in Slovenia (in 1990) the need for the Slovene liberation process to be regulated by laws has become increasingly urgent. It is clear that the broadest common interest of all the new parliamentary political parties was a thorough change of the social order, including the development of a new national security system. The latter aspect was in fact emphasised in the programmes of most Slovene political parties. Most party programmes spoke of military organisation, even though the notion of a demilitarised Slovenia had been strongly advocated before the elections. The twin poles in this debate stood for extreme and diametrically opposite positions, thus undermining the practical application of either of them. By presenting as the only alternative a new Slovene army or a Slovene demilitarised zone, the parties caused schisms within themselves, as well as in the public opinion.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Territorial Defense was at that time a militia army (composed of a small core of professionals and large reserve units), organised on the level of individual Yugoslav republics, communes and some larger enterprises. According to the Yugoslav constitution (1974) TD was one of two constituent parts of the Yugoslav armed forces (the other being the YPA).

<sup>3</sup> Anton Grizold, *Civilian Supervision of the Military in Slovenia*. The Public, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1994), p. 90.

After the first multi-party elections the new Slovene parliament introduced sweeping changes in the legal system thus opening the way for abolishing the inherited authoritarian political system. The adoption of a new Slovene constitution in December 1991 established the widest possible legal framework for implementing the following changes affecting also the Slovene national security system:

1. the legalisation of a multi-party parliamentary democracy is put into effect;
2. the principle of the division of power between executive, legislative and judiciary is enshrined by the constitution;
3. the governmental authority over matters of national security, especially defense was increased. The government both proposes all defense expenditure, as well as defines and regulates the defense capacity of the military;
4. all executive responsibilities relating to defense are invested in a single body, the Defense Ministry. The General Staff of the Slovene Army as the highest-ranking organ of the Slovene military, has itself become a constituent part of the Defense Ministry, and its Chief of Staff answers directly to the Defense Minister;
5. the Slovene Army is now the only regular military force in the state and combines elements of a standing army and of dispersed territorial units;
6. all laws which had enabled the army to regulate its affairs autonomously (e.g. education, social security and health care) have been abolished. The status of professional soldiers, officers, NCOs is now the same as that of civil servants with some exceptions, such as the prohibition to strike, that relate only to the special nature of a military organisation;
7. all former special military schools have been closed. Professional soldiers are now recruited from high schools and universities before receiving their professional military education at a new military educational centre which falls under the responsibility of the Defense Ministry.<sup>4</sup>

These reforms at the level of both the political system and national security prepared the stage for a qualitative change of civil-military relations in Slovenia. The former symbiotic relationship between the military and the communist party was abolished the moment professional military personnel were no longer required to be party members. All party activities were prohibited while an end was put to religion related restrictions and discrimination within the military. The entire military corps has become more socially representative from the standpoint of gender, social origin and religion, and more nationally and culturally homogenous. Professional officer and NCO ranks are more accessible to women. The military is now under strict civilian control; the Defense Minister is a civilian who answers directly to parliament and government. The national security system as a whole is more transparent and accessible to parliamentary scrutiny, mass media, empirical science and to public criticism.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Anton Grizold, *ibid.* p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Anton Bebler, Slovenian Territorial Defense. *International Defense Review*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1993), p. 67.

Unlike the previous system in Yugoslavia, relations between Slovene civilian and military institutions are now organised similarly to those of developed parliamentary states. This design ensures that:

- in the division between civil and military power, the former prevails over the latter;
- military leadership is in the hands of the highest representative power in government;
- all decisions concerning national security are made by the parliament;
- the military is restricted to a purely executive role;
- the military is de-politicised.

Despite the positive evolution of civil-military relations and of the whole national security framework in Slovenia, certain problems have arisen slowing down the development of a democratic system.

These problems primarily derive from two sources:

1. incomplete establishment of an overall legal order in the Slovene state since many new laws affecting the rearrangement of various fields of Slovene public life are still to be adopted under the new constitution;
2. different degrees of institutionalisation concerning national security arrangements, and insufficient accountability of legal organs to the parliament and the public.

These facts indicate a state of vagueness and ambiguity regarding the responsibility of state institutions and the new order of law in matters of national security. This is apparent in the way that state organs fail to fulfil their peacetime function of national security. Such difficulties arise presently in Slovenia where the situation is characterised by a high degree of politicisation, a marked failure by the civil society and its professional associations to influence vital political decisions and disruptive splits within the newly emerging Slovene political elite which infests political life with personal and party squabbling over irregularities, ideology and faux pas. The fact is that since independence the Slovene political sphere has become more fragmented and ridden with antagonism.<sup>6</sup>

In sum, the most problematic element in the process of transformation from authoritarian to democratic socio-political structures, including the creation of a new Slovene national security framework, is the present political elite that is unable and/or unwilling to overcome divisive tendencies dating back to partisan politics during the war and subsequent regime history.

## **2. Basic Elements of the New European Security Environment**

The end of the Cold War triggered real tectonic movements in international relations (break-up of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, disintegration of the former Soviet

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<sup>6</sup> Anton Grizold, *Civilian Supervision of the Military in Slovenia*, p. 92.

Union and Yugoslavia, dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, reunification of Germany etc.). From the point of view of security, various changes occurring after the revolutionary changes of 1989 eased to some extent international tensions and improved the overall security in Europe. The existing international security organisations (UN, NATO, WEU and OSCE) are thus facing new challenges. In the changed international environment they need to find themselves a new legitimacy founded on new assignments and have to set up new structures different from those determined by the Cold War and bipolar division of the world.

In Europe we are at present witnessing a process of repolarisation in the political and military area as well as the formation of a multipolar world, both leading to a mixture of positive and negative consequences. A partly improved security climate elicited co-operation among European countries also with regard to the search for and the establishment of a common and integrated European security system. At the same time, however, political, military, economic and social instability is growing throughout the continent. The cores of instability and danger in Europe can be found mainly in the area ranging from the former Soviet Union through Central Europe, the Balkans and further on to the Near and Middle East and to the Maghreb.<sup>7</sup>

Since 1992 the military aspect of security in Europe was limited to the danger of rearmament, and in particular the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Economic aspects of security became of increased importance representing a challenge as well as an opportunity for strengthening Europe's political stability. Europe remains divided into two groups. On the one hand there is a group of economically prosperous countries with their external security guaranteed and on the other a group of mostly post-socialist countries in transition witnessing deteriorating socio-economic conditions marked by hyper-inflation, pauperisation and unemployment.<sup>8</sup> The humanitarian aspect of the European security is also gaining in significance. New "artificial" minorities are being formed by streams of immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. Individual security is threatened by a new wave of xenophobia and racism. Violence against minorities became a way of expressing protest as people's expectations were not fulfilled.<sup>9</sup>

In contemporary Europe, a wider concept of national and international security is gradually being implemented incorporating economic, political, social, humanitarian, environmental, military, etc. aspects. Within this concept an important position has been taken up by issues such as the protection of human rights and freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. Although the existing security organisations in Europe consider also non-military aspects of the European security, there has been a marked difference between great powers and small countries concerning their national security endeavours. The great powers are still focused on the military aspect of their national security (defense of borders, territorial waters and air space), whilst the smaller countries are much more concerned with the threat to their political,

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<sup>7</sup> Theodor Winkler, *Central Europe and the Post-Cold War European Security Order*, p. 33. In: K. Jacob (ed.), *Central European Security Concerns: Bridge, Buffer or Barrier?*, London 1993.

<sup>8</sup> Brigitte Sauerwein, *European Security: The Institutional Challenge*. *International Defense Review*, 26 (1), p. 31.

<sup>9</sup> Brigitte Sauerwein, *ibid.*

economic and cultural autonomy. In present-day Europe the fight for autonomy remains an important component of the political reality of small countries.<sup>10</sup> In any case, it is in the interest of each small country to formulate a wider concept of modern security, paying attention in the first place to non-military aspects of security since this is the only way by which they will become a sovereign and credible partner in their international relations.

In their endeavours for peace, stability and security in today's Europe not all small countries find themselves in the same position but can be divided into three groups: a group of small countries from Western Europe being full members of all or the majority of European institutions; a group of small countries which co-operate with European institutions and are gradually gaining membership (in at least some of the institutions), and a group of small countries which are facing various difficulties in their rapprochement to the European institutions.<sup>11</sup> The ranking of each individual country in one of the above groups in a way determines its chances of obtaining guarantees for their national security and for being able to associate themselves to the new European security order. In contemporary Europe, peace and security are assured by three factors, namely (1) by the strengthening of security organisations and an appropriate division of work among these (NATO, WEU, OSCE); (2) by the development of political and military co-operation among the countries through a network of bilateral and multilateral security dialogues; (3) by setting up mechanisms preventing inter-state conflicts as well as intrinsic conflicts within each country, based on the values and experience of the previous development of the OSCE.

The present European security environment contains the elements of peace, stability and security as well as elements of instability, insecurity and danger. This environment thus produces positive and negative effects on the security of smaller countries.

Let us have a look at some positive effects of the European security environment on the security of smaller countries:

1. a general easing of tensions between the European great powers enabling a higher level of co-operation between the countries and peaceful conflict and dispute resolution and eventually decreasing danger of an outbreak of a large military conflict and a direct military threat to small countries.
2. Smaller countries being able to co-operate with international security organisations on the basis of multilateral agreements. The latter guarantees them a certain influence on the political and security developments in Europe and an opportunity to avoid a too high dependence on only one organisation or country.
3. The tendency toward regionalism in Europe opens new opportunities for smaller countries to co-operate in resolving regional security issues (for example, in the framework of the

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<sup>10</sup> H. Gartner and A. Sens, *Small States and the Security Structures of Europe: The Search for Security after the Cold War*, p. 182. In: Ingo Peters (ed.), *New Security Challenges: The Adaptation of International Institutions*. St. Martin's Press, New York 1996.

<sup>11</sup> H. Gartner and A. Sens, *ibid.*

Nordic Council, Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean, etc.). Although in the framework of regional co-operation forums small countries cannot solve their basic security dilemmas, they can at least take part in consultations and try to create an appropriate political climate.

4. The USA's participation in establishing the new European security order and its constant presence in Europe contributes to the security of small countries. By their presence in Europe the USA help balance various forms of special relations and factors (for example, French-German co-operation, special position of the European nuclear powers, special relations between Great Britain and the USA, etc.) and alleviate constant fears of small countries of being overpowered by some stronger country or a group of them.<sup>12</sup>
5. The strengthening of bilateral and multilateral military and political co-operation among the European countries.

Among the negative elements affecting the security of smaller countries in the present-day European security environment we should point out the following:

1. many small European countries face threats originating from their intrinsic development (for example, the majority of post-socialist countries), as well as from local threats based on long lasting regional conflicts and/or rivalry (for example, Croatia - Serbia, Greece - Turkey, Baltic republics, Moldavia - Russia);
2. the aspects of European integration are not all positive, as integration causes also concern regarding an individual country's national sovereignty (not only in their politico-economic but also socio-cultural aspect), which holds true in particular for smaller countries;
3. a resumed division of areas of interest among the great powers, and in particular in the Central Eastern and South Eastern part of Europe and in the Mediterranean;
4. modernisation and professional approach in the armed forces mostly in strong and developed countries suggest that the use of force remains an important political instrument of modern countries.

In short, the new European security arrangement is not simply a model of co-operative security. It still contains numerous unknowns and also elements of the previous European security system. It is of paramount importance for smaller countries what kind of security regulation model is to be introduced in the future. The eventual development of the multipolar balance of power, for example, raises some dilemmas regarding the mechanisms for assuring the external aspect of security, a problem smaller countries have faced already in the past under the balance of power system. In former times, security mechanisms of smaller countries comprised predominantly bilateral and multilateral linkages and the policy of neutrality.<sup>13</sup> We can learn from historic experience that alliances of smaller countries with great powers may

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<sup>12</sup> Theodor Winkler, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> Allen Sens, *Small-State Security in Europe: Threats, Anxieties and Strategies after the Cold War*, p. 83. In: Werner Bauwens, Armand Clesse & Olav F. Knudsen, *Small States and the Security Challenge in the New Europe*. Brassey's. London. Washington, 1996.



create new enemies, are often unreliable and may even lead to the loss of autonomy regarding foreign and even internal policy. Furthermore, the policy of neutrality depends greatly on an favourable international environment ensured primarily by great powers, as well as on the readiness of countries to maintain neutrality at any cost.

A possible concerted system of European security regulation would also not be the one most welcome by smaller countries. This system, by the definition alone, means the domination of great powers which would most probably soon abolish the participation of smaller countries in the decision making process regarding European security matters.

Further economic-political integration and a highlighted importance of co-operation and mutual confidence among the European countries as such do not guarantee the security of smaller countries. Although an integrative environment guarantees security against traditional sources of threat (based on the use of armed force), it causes at the same time greater vulnerability of and concern among small countries regarding:

1. the preservation of economic-political autonomy,
2. marginalisation in the European institutions and decision-making,
3. concentration of integration benefits within a smaller group of countries, etc.

The implementation of European security regulation based on the system of collective security would have on the normative level several advantages for small countries (for example, putting into effect the mechanisms for peaceful dispute resolution, chances for a formal co-operation of all members in the security related decision-making processes, commitments of great powers as defined in multilateral agreements, etc.). Actual practice, however, has proven that for example in the UN, implementing any of the collective security mechanisms depends most of all on the political will of great powers.

We can conclude from the above that irrespective of the model of security regulation which is to be implemented in the future Europe, it will have positive as well as negative effects on the security of smaller countries. It is therefore of vital importance for smaller countries that in the framework of their national security policies they adhere to an integral modern security concept embodying military and non-military aspects of national security in the context of domestic and international environment. Only by consistent adherence to this concept will smaller countries become credible partners in international relations and will be able to ensure their own security by their own forces as well as by participating in wider security institutions.

It is undoubtedly one of the principle common interests of smaller countries that the European security regulations continue to be founded on the principles of co-operation, peaceful dispute resolution and operation of multilateral institutions who in their endeavours for a common and integral security system complement each other and ensure the participation of each European country.

### **3. The International Aspect of Slovene National Security Policy**

Despite the fact that the newly emerging political elite in Slovenia has serious difficulties in reaching a clear consensus on key questions related to fundamental national interests, it is generally agreed that the strategic goal of Slovenia is to join the process of European integration and thereby become a full member of the EU and NATO as soon as possible.

The responsibility of the Slovene state concerning national security is mainly outlined by the Resolution on the Principles of National Security in the Republic of Slovenia passed by the Slovene parliament (December 1993) which lists several considerable external and internal threats along with some main instruments for dealing with them. The resolution states Slovenia's commitment to the peaceful resolution of interstate conflicts and the reduction of heavy arms. However, if attacked, this resolution states, Slovenia would defend itself with arms, relying mainly on its own defense capabilities. The international aspect of Slovene peace time national security policy is based on the policy of defensive self-reliance on the one hand and on close association with NATO on the other.

On April 11, 1996, the Slovene parliament passed another resolution stating that "the Republic of Slovenia wishes to ensure its fundamental security interest within the system of collective defense enabled by membership of NATO". This document in fact indicates the achievement of a broad national consensus on the foundations of national security policy. The implementation of the Slovene foreign policy goals, the most important of which is Slovenia's inclusion in the processes of European integration and collective security institutions, is based on the principles of confidence and mutual trust and co-operation instead of deterrence and hostile competition among states. In terms of security this means that the present Slovene establishment has chosen co-operation with other countries as an important means of problem solving.

On the practical level Slovene governments strive to strengthen good neighbourly relations as a means of constructive foreign policy. Considering Slovenia's relations with neighbouring countries one can conclude that in the last two years, Slovenia has accomplished several essential moves in order to improve its relations with neighbouring countries. As a whole these relations are good, although with Italy and Croatia some issues have yet to be resolved. While independent Slovenia has been improving friendly relations with Hungary and Austria ties with Italy and Croatia are rather more complicated. In 1994 the Italian government led by Mr. Berlusconi severed its relations with Slovenia, demanding a revision of the basic international treaty, which established the relations between Italy and Slovenia within the former Yugoslavia, and which was already acknowledged by the Italian government (1991-1993). The current Italian demands negate their former agreement and involve property settlement for "optants" (i.e. the Italians who left Yugoslavia after the Second World War) in the Slovene processes of de-nationalisation and privatisation, and seek grant priority rights to the purchase of assets in Slovenia. This issue caused a split in the Slovene ruling political coalition and resulted in the foreign minister's resignation. The new Italian government in 1996 brings positive progress in settling the above mentioned issues satisfactorily for both sides. Efforts to resolve issues with Croatia, of which the most important is the question of the

Slovene-Croat border, have so far been rather inefficient mostly because both countries have set for their foreign policy orientations different priorities: Slovenia looks toward European integration, Croatia on the other hand toward a satisfactory end to the war on its territory.

In the last two years Slovenia has made significant progress in terms of integration with the West, especially with the EU (it has an association agreement) and NATO. Since the latter occupies the centre stage in European security, expanding its activity with new roles, missions and partners, it is understandable that Slovenia aims to become a NATO member.

In January 1994, immediately after the NATO summit which formally introduced the Partnership for Peace Programme (PfPP) the Slovene government declared its support for this programme and revealed its intention to take part. In March 1994, Slovenia signed the Framework Document of the PfPP and, in July of the same year, it produced its Presentation Document. In May 1995, the Individual PfPP between Slovenia and NATO was adopted. The PfPP makes the prospects of both political and military co-operation with NATO much more tangible. The depth of co-operation in the PfPP differs in the various fields of activity, but the areas considered to be the most important for the emerging Slovene defense system are as follows:

- The education and training of commissioned officers. The Slovene authorities believe the establishment of a completely autonomous educational system for military cadres is both irrational and uneconomical. They expect, therefore, to educate and train high-ranking military personnel to a large extent abroad.
- Adapting the organisation of the military to modern standards. Since the Slovene defense system has not yet been completely developed, the Department of Defense wishes to introduce standards and procedures which would ensure compatibility with NATO.
- Creating a NATO-style command, control and information system which would be primarily concerned with the implementation of search and rescue, relief and peace operations.
- Participation in joint exercises and acquiring suitable experiences.
- Establishing an international co-operation unit. The Slovene Department of Defense formed in 1996 a professional unit of the Slovene Army ranked at the battalion level which will be specially trained for PfPP activities.

Such co-operation in the PfPP is important for Slovenia as a small country for the following reasons:

1. The psychological effect of improved security upon the country of knowing that in consolidating its national defense, Slovenia can depend upon a larger system of alliances.
2. Slovenia is able to participate in joint operational planning via the Slovene mission to NATO and via liaison officers in the PfPP Co-ordination Cell in Mons.
3. In developing new military-defense structures and procedures, a certain level of functional, structural, technological and military-political compatibility with NATO can be acquired.

4. It can be considered as the first step in the process of comprehensive inclusion in the integrated military and political structure of NATO.

According to some high official NATO representatives, Slovenia has proved to be a very active and reliable partner in the PfPP. Furthermore, Slovenia's ambition to co-operate with NATO was definitely expressed when a separate law was passed by the Slovene Parliament (February 1994), which ensures funds for the development of its defense forces from 1994 to 2003. This law also states that "the arms and equipment procured in accordance with the present Law must meet the standards of the NATO defense system."<sup>14</sup>

#### **4. Public Opinion on Slovenia's Foreign Policy Goal of NATO Inclusion**

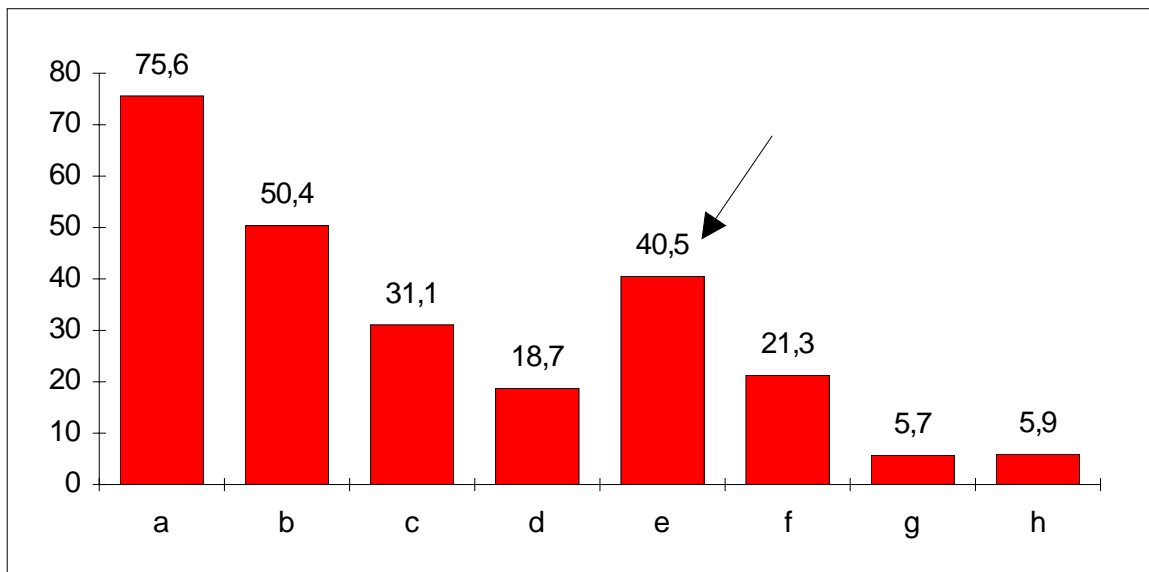
In a democracy, the popularity and comprehension of political strategy and goals among the average citizens can often be measured by public opinion polls. These polls can sometimes have a significant cause-and-effect reaction throughout the political spectrum, and can be a potent force in determining future strategies. Between December 15, 1994 and January 19, 1995 a public opinion poll based on a representative sample of 1050 adult Slovene citizens was carried out by the Defense Research Center at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. Although the survey covered many different dimensions of Slovene national security (e.g. threats to international security, the formation of Pan-European military forces, etc.), the following deals only with the questions which concern Slovenia and NATO.

The following question were used to identify the viewpoints and the expectations of the respondents concerning this issue.

- i) " Which is the most effective way for Slovenia to provide its future military security?"  
(See graph 1).

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<sup>14</sup> The Law on the Provision of Resources for the Realisation of Key Development Programmes of Defense Forces of the Republic of Slovenia 1994-2003. Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 13/1994.

*Graph 1*

a) by establishing friendly neighbourly relations	e) by joining NATO
b) by means of defense agreements with other states	f) by using its own army in a Pan-European military forces framework
c) by strengthening the Slovenian army	g) Slovenia is not threatened in a military way
d) by strengthening the Slovenian police	h) do not know/cannot tell

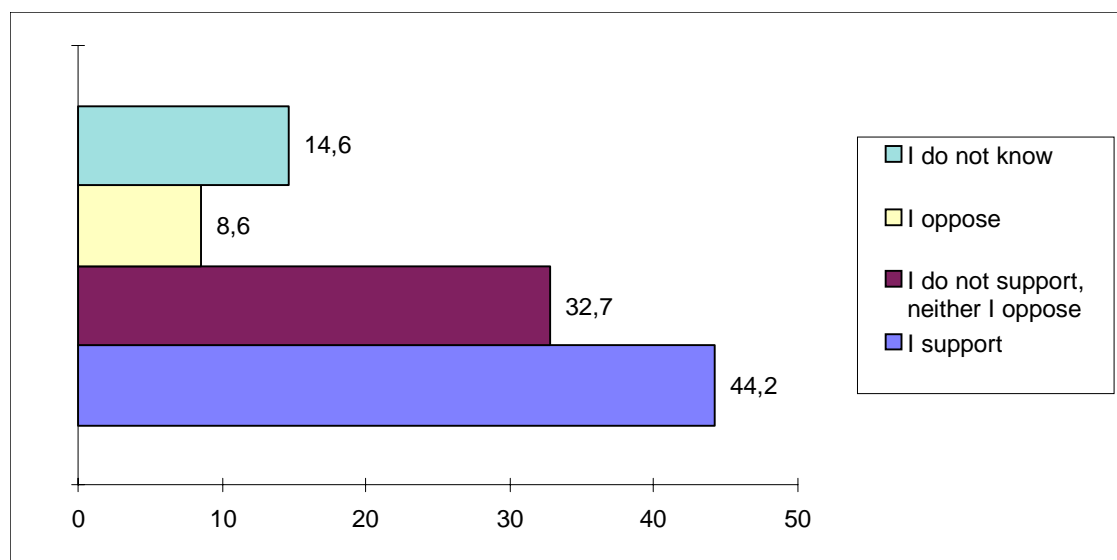
Source: Defense Research Center, "The National Security of Slovenia", 1994/95. Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (DRC, NSS 1994/95).

It turns out, that the majority of respondents suggest that Slovenia should, to a much greater extent, complement the military aspect of its national security with non-military means i.e. diplomatic, political and cultural relations (e.g. good neighbourly relations- 75%; defense agreements with other states- 50.4%; and admission to NATO- 40.5%). One group of respondents (31%) believed that the strengthening of the Slovene military was the most adequate instrument for guaranteeing Slovenia's military security.

ii) "The Slovenian state has been persevering in its attempts to be admitted to NATO membership. Do you personally support or oppose these endeavours?" (See graph 2)

From graph 2 it can be concluded that 8% of the respondents oppose Slovenia's membership of NATO, while 44% support it, and 32.7% neither supports nor opposes this course of action.

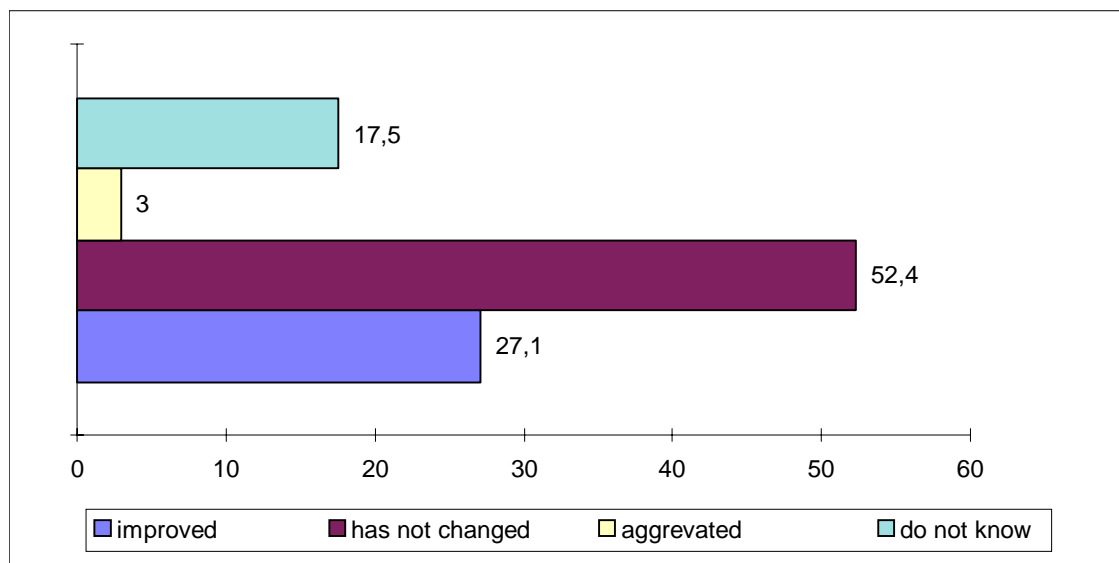
Graph 2



Source: DRC, NSS 1994/95.

iii) "Slovenia has become an equal partner in the programme "Partnerships for Peace", within the NATO framework. Do you think the security situation has improved or worsened?" (See graph 3).

Graph 3

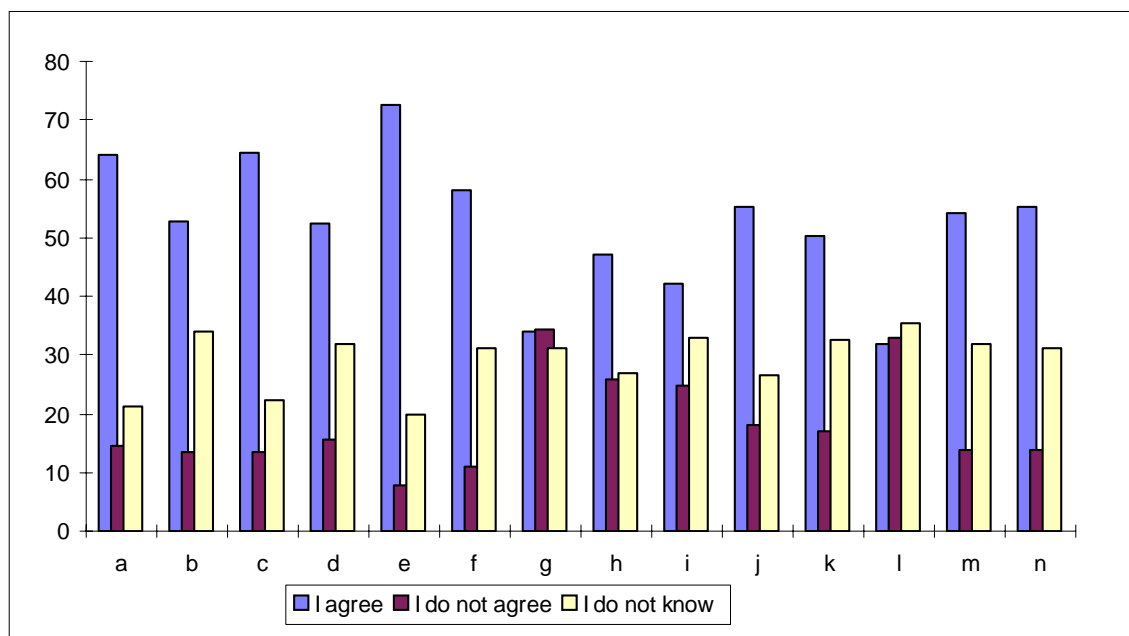


Source: DRC, NSS 1994/95.

Only 3% of the respondents estimate that Slovene national security has deteriorated, while half of them think that the situation has not changed at all.

iv) "Evaluations of the advantages and the disadvantages of Slovenian admission to NATO vary greatly. Do you, personally, agree with the following statements?" (See graph 4).

Graph 4



a) Slovenian reputation in the world would grow b) the arms importing embargo would be lifted c) the military security of Slovenia would be strengthened d) it would mean more money for the defense budget e) the Slovenian armed forces would have better access to modern weapons f) Slovenia would find it easier to join processes of European integration g) NATO military bases would provide jobs for the local population h) NATO military bases would be a threat to the environment	i) the personnel at the military bases would present a disturbing social factor j) the establishment of NATO bases would result in a huge loss of territory as Slovenia is a small country k) Slovenian military forces would become more efficient after their admission to NATO l) with the membership of NATO, Slovenian sovereignty would be compromised m) Slovenian corporations could participate in military projects of the NATO members n) membership in NATO might require Slovenia to participate in military actions outside its territories.
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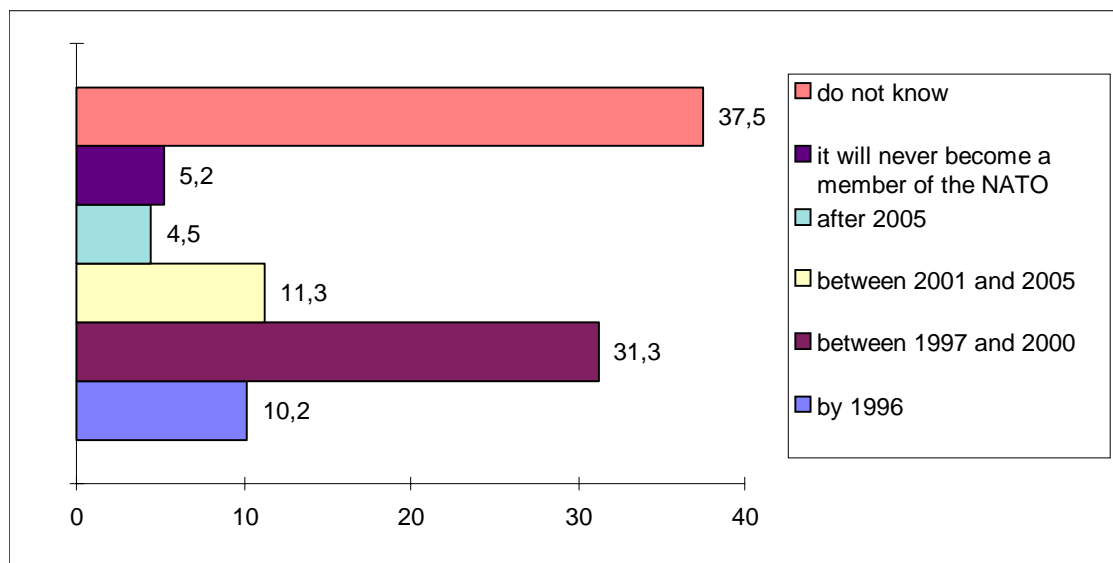
Source: DRC, NSS 1994/95.

What can be seen from the graph 4 is that the respondents are well aware of both the strengths and weaknesses of Slovene membership in NATO. These views are consistent with the latest NATO study on expansion according to which each potential member of NATO has to accomplish its own cost-benefit analysis and decide whether to join NATO or not.

v) "The Slovenian state aims to be admitted to NATO, as soon as possible. When, in your opinion, will Slovenia actually become a member of the NATO?" (See graph 5).



Graph 5



Source: DRC, NSS 1994/95.

Graph 5 demonstrates that almost 40% of the respondents do not know or cannot make up their minds concerning this issue. The rest of the answers are as follows: 10.2% of respondents favour 1996 as the earliest date for membership; 31.3% chose 1997 to 2000; 11.3% think that Slovene membership of NATO will be achieved between 2001 and 2005; and 4.5% thought that this was likely after 2005. Of the remaining respondents, 5.2% think that Slovenia will never join NATO.

On the basis of both direct and indirect indicators deriving from the results of this public opinion survey, the following can be concluded:

First: as to how the military security of Slovenia has to be assured, most respondents first and foremost stress the means of constructive foreign policy. A strengthening of the Slovenian army as a means of assuring military security is avowed by a minority of 30% of respondents. In contrast, strengthening good neighbourly relations has priority for 75% of the respondents.

Second: the results tend to emphasise that there does not appear to be any significant discrepancy between public opinion and the views of the Slovene authorities with regard to national security within the European security framework. A more specific question on NATO suggests that 44% of the respondents would approve of Slovenian membership, while 9% disapprove.<sup>15</sup>

Third: it appears that the question of joining NATO is being approached in a realistic way. In addition, the public is well aware that within the framework of integration and détente in

<sup>15</sup> The question (Do you support the endeavours of Slovene government for inclusion into NATO?) was repeated in public opinion survey in October 1996 and the result shows an increased support of the respondents (around 68%) for Slovenia's inclusion in NATO (See: Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Center. Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Eurobarometer 2, October 1996).

Europe, there is a real opportunity for NATO to reform and to strengthen, above all, its political role. However, on the basis of the results, one can identify a need for the Slovene population to be promptly and thoroughly informed concerning all of the advantages and disadvantages which full membership in NATO will bring. Only then will the young Slovene state be able to provide the necessary political and cultural framework within which the equilibrium of public values and beliefs, the political regime and the national security system can operate on a basis of mutual trust.

## 5. Conclusion

The national security policies of modern states are not only related to the pursuit of national interests, but also to the influences of the international security environment. The transition to the post-cold war security environment in Europe presents an opportunity for the development of a comprehensive pan-European security order, based on common values and a code of conduct, which would express a desire to use peaceful means in conflict resolution within and between states. The creation of a new European security order on the basis of the above mentioned values and principles is not a simple straight forward process, but is accompanied by difficulties, new conflicts and uncertainties. Nevertheless, the prevailing trend toward co-operation and continued economic and political integration as well as several existing multilateral institutions in Europe now offer regional states, and especially smaller ones, an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process on political and security affairs in Europe.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the creation of a new security order throughout Europe should be an element of the national security policies of all states, particularly the smaller ones. By definition every small state has limited resources and therefore must shoulder the burden of its own military-defense obligations before relying upon potential co-operation and aid from other states or supranational security organisations. Only after they reach an adequate degree of their internal stability and security, can smaller states act as sovereign and reliable partners in the international community. Nevertheless, the small states should develop their national security structure in a way that opens the possibility for their eventual inclusion into a larger security system.

Military intervention in Slovenia by the YPA in 1991, the attempt to settle the entire Yugoslav crisis by arms, as well as the inefficiency of the existing international security mechanisms and instruments in dealing with this crisis, have brought about the recognition that Slovenia needs to ensure its national security with both military and non-military instruments organised into a new national security system. Moreover, it is of utmost importance for Slovenia as a small state to join the integrational processes and design its national security structure for inclusion into the larger evolving multi-institutional European security structure. Since NATO has the necessary operative military-defense capabilities to successfully provide collective defense for its members, it is a very attractive military-political organisation for most of the post-socialist countries.

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<sup>16</sup> Allen Sens, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

Unlike other Central-Eastern European former socialist countries, Slovenia had never been a member of the former Warsaw Pact. Due to its substantial success in its transition to a democracy (economic and political stability, establishing democratic civil-military relations and defensive military force, etc.)<sup>17</sup> as well as its significant progress in terms of co-operation with Western institutions, one would assume that NATO will offer Slovenia an opportunity to become a full member as soon as possible.

Indeed, the best way for NATO to prove its credibility and justify its continued existence is to permit new members to join, with stable and reliable partners invited first.

As for Slovenia's role in a pan-European security structure and NATO enlargement, it is presently of primary importance to reach broader social consensus among its population for its political decision to become a full member of NATO.

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<sup>17</sup> As far as the domestic economic situation is concerned, some of the main macroeconomic indicators of the Slovene economy are as follows: a) GDP per capita (in US \$): latest: 9.663; compared to one year ago: 9.352. b) Foreign exchange reserves: latest: 3,5 billion US \$, sufficient to finance four months of imports and 15 per cent in excess of total foreign debt; compared to one year ago: 3,4 billion US \$. c) Inflation, at the end of the year: latest: around 10 per cent; compared to one year ago: around 18 per cent. d) Standardised rate of unemployment (ILO definition): latest: 8 per cent; compared to one year ago: 7,4 per cent. For more information see: IMAD, Slovenia Economic Mirror, Vol. 11, No. 7, p. 30, July 1996 and Paul Phillips and Bogomil Ferfila, The First Five Years. Slovenia. Quarterly Magazine. Vol. X, No. 2 (1996), pp. 4-8.

**Anton Grizold**

## **Slovenia's National Security in a New European Environment**

Bericht des BIOst Nr. 12/1997

### **Summary**

#### *Introductory Remarks*

As a newly established nation-state Slovenia continues to develop concepts, policies, and institutions to provide for its national security. She does so as a young country in a new Europe and must consider not only her own experiences, principles, and international politics, but also the dynamic environment of the multifaceted proposals and efforts at European integration. These are the basic considerations for understanding the process whereby Slovenia is forming a new national security network, both internally and on the international level, and also for following Slovenia's endeavours to participate in the European integration process and join NATO and the European Union.

#### *Findings*

1. Slovenia must look at developments in the newly evolving European - and indeed global - security environment in addition to her own needs as she continues to define a national security framework, since by definition such policies and institutions are inherently linked to those on an international scale.
2. From the outset of modern Slovene independence, the desire to thoroughly reorganise the country's socio-political institutions and to reform the national security system was unanimous among, and clearly expressed, by practically all the competing political parties in parliament. The basic issue of whether to reorganise the Slovene army or in fact to demilitarise the country, has however remained a divisive issue in government and in public.
3. The new Slovene constitution of December 1991 embodied seven basic changes affecting the national security system. These involve the beginning of a multi-party parliamentary democracy, division of power between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, increased governmental authority over military budget and activities, reorganisation of the Defense Ministry as well as consolidating the army, abolishing all laws giving the military autonomy in key social and political areas, and abolishing "special" military schools which previously took the place of public high schools and university.

4. These reforms eliminate the privileged relationship the military used to enjoy with the leading government party and end political and religious discrimination from military life. They also have the impact of making the Slovenian military corps more socially representative in terms of gender, religion and social origin.
5. The military is now completely under civilian control, modelling those of developed parliamentary governments, and is more transparent in terms of access by parliament, the media, academia and the public. The new organisation also ensures that military leadership is under the highest national representative power, that all national security decisions are made by parliament while the military itself is limited to an executive role, and otherwise depoliticized.
6. Problems have, however, arisen in Slovenia's transition of civil-military relations in building the new national security framework. They stem from delays in adopting new legislation and ambiguous accountability of state legal institutions to parliament and the public concerning national security affairs. These conditions, in turn, are symptomatic of antagonistic and immature Slovene politics, in which a newly emerging elite is still torn by internal strife, and in which civil and professional elements of society still lack substantial influence.
7. On the international level, Slovenia has adopted co-operation instead of competition as a primary strategy for solving international problems. Locally, Slovenia has striven aggressively to improve relations with neighbouring states. While largely successful in this effort, two key issues yet unresolved involve Italian "optant" claims for property rights in Slovenia and border issues with Croatia.
8. Despite political squabbling and some public uncertainty, there is general consensus to move in direction of European integration, namely the EU and NATO. This is in fact Slovenia's priority goal in her foreign policy, which officially commits the country to the peaceful resolution of interstate conflicts but to defend itself with arms if attacked, alone, if necessary. Slovenia has expressed vigorous support for NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme, and her defense establishment is most interested in its opportunities for officers education and training, modernising personnel organisation and aligning it with NATO convention, building a NATO-compatible communication system, participation in joint/combined exercises, and establishing a dedicated international co-operation unit in the military. The Slovene parliament passed legislation further supporting NATO and PfPP activities by providing funds to develop its defense forces and to ensure, that its equipment is NATO compatible.
9. Slovenia sees the benefits of co-operation in the PfPP in an improved psychological sense of security for the nation, participation in joint operational planning, developing a modern military defense structure and procedures compatible with NATO's, and eventual inclusion in an integrated pan-European military and political structure.
10. The Slovene public is well aware that within the framework of integration and détente in Europe, there is a real opportunity for NATO to reform and to strengthen its security role .

In addition, the Slovene public wants to be promptly informed on both the strengths and weaknesses of Slovenia's membership in Nato.